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restaurant*guide*

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p. 9





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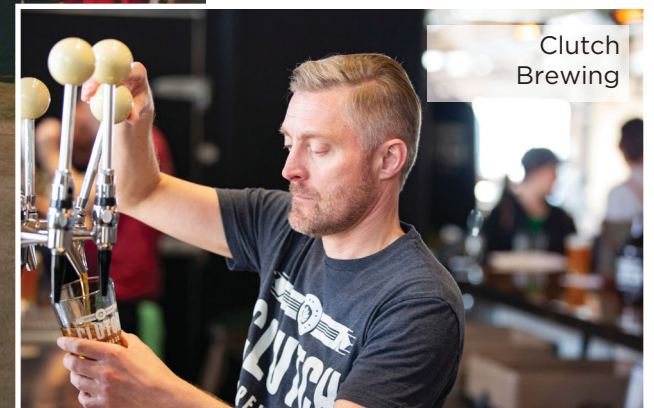




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and artifacts from the original Schmidt Brewery. Finally, top off your visit on the market's mezzanine level at Clutch Brewing where you will catch a birds-eye view of the market below.

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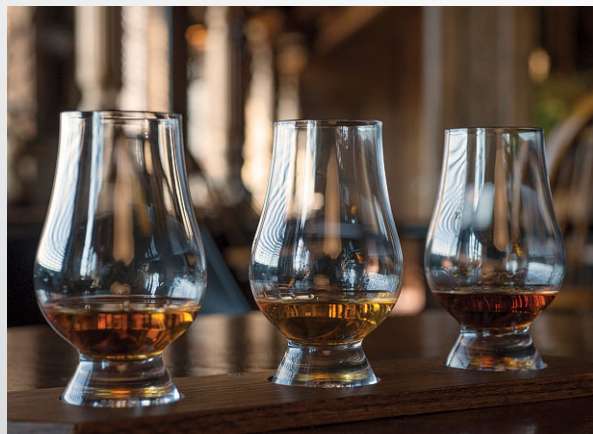
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MINNESOTA



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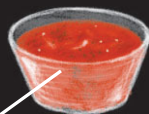
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By Sarah Brumble



ON THE COVER

prieto
taqueria bar

See our restaurant feature on the opposite page.



Prieto

Taqueria Bar



SIMPLY, A TACO

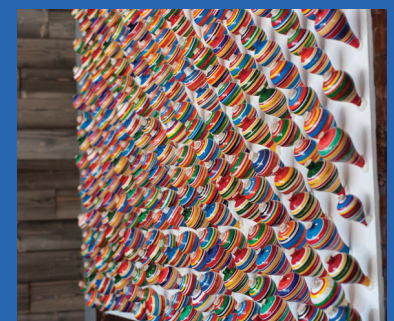
At the crossroads of Lyndale and Lake Street stands the most recent creation from Chef Alejandro Castillon Prieto; Prieto Taqueria Bar. Castillon, an immigrant from Sonora, Mexico, carried his natural gift for flavor and creativity to Lyndale Ave in early June, where the balance of intense flavors from his smoker and vibrant homemade salsas stand tall amidst the gathering of local spots surrounding Lyn-Lake.

Castillon has been a highlight on the Minneapolis food scene since the opening of his first restaurant, Sonora Grill, in 2011. His decision to sell Sonora in pursuit of what is now Prieto didn't disappoint. Prieto's menu provides guests with an array of traditional Mexican dishes that continuously keep up with Chef Castillon's flair for food imagination. Smoked meats immersed with sweet traditional Mexico flavors grace most of the menu, while daily handmade corn and flour tortillas top off the simplicity of the Prieto cooking method.



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Prieto not only features Castillon's ever-expanding dining creations but a cocktail menu to match. Its flavor pallet pairs with the cuisine beautifully and stems from an array of tequilas – also the backdrop to a stunningly crisp bar. The essence of simplistic energy is carried throughout the unique Prieto space; from the art installations custom made in Mexico, to the graffiti wall paying homage to some of Castillon's hometown taquerias. Whether brunch or a dinner date, or any of Prieto's multiple daily Happy Hours, expect bold, memorable flavors, a taste of tradition, all wrapped up in the simplicity of a taco.



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CELEBRATING 20 YEARS - 1997 TO 2017



I ate **29** of your favorite Twin Cities pizzas.

These are the best.

By Abeer Syedah

Eating all the best pizza in Minneapolis and St. Paul wasn't an easy task. But I did it for the people.

Back in March, I decided that publicly sharing my opinions on pizza in the Twin Cities was a good idea. But, being me, I approached the situation with negativity as I declared that Pizza Lucé—though much beloved—was not good pizza and only popular because of their catering, dietary accessibility, and convenience (though continuing to not deliver to north Minneapolis). After understandably being called out for my negativity and receiving requests for my recommendations for alternatives, I decided it was only right that I eat all the best pizza in the great cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul and declare a winner.

I asked Minnesota Twitter™ to tell me what the best pizzas were and compiled a list of 29. For fairness, I ordered a margarita or some cheese/tomato/basil-component pizza at every location in addition to trying other intriguing options. After finding myself in a three-way tie between equally delicious but different pizzas, I separated the best of the best based on establishment and style.

Best Pizza In the Twin Cities: Geek Love Cafe at Moon Palace Books

After requesting favorite pizzas and getting a bookstore for several responses, I was admittedly skeptical. But it only took one bite of the Travis McGee (pesto, tomato, mozzarella) and the Almanac of the Dead (garlic, roasted beets, habanero honey, and goat cheese), to know this place

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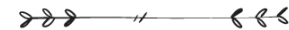
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is special. The crust was flawlessly chewy and airy, but slightly crisp, topped with flavor combinations that were so clearly thoughtful and balanced. Every component felt traditional yet elevated.

What sets Geek Love apart from and above the other fantastic pizza joints in town is the experience: Nestled inside one of the best bookstores in the Cities, Geek Love offers everything from breakfast and coffee to beer, wine, and regionally sourced ingredients for their pizzas. They also serve optional vegan cheeses and toppings, organic fresh vegetables, and even house-made gluten-free crusts upon request. Sometimes they have happy hours and pizza-by-the-slice specials, which you can enjoy on their spacious summer patio or indoors as you read a book or enjoy some live music. Also, there's off-street parking and we all know how critical that is. I thought about those pizzas for days and can't wait to find my way into Moon Palace in the winter, grab a book, grab a drink, grab a slice, and get cozy.

- ☒ Vegan options
- ☒ Gluten-free
- ☐ Halal
- ☐ Delivery

Geek Love Cafe

3032 Minnehaha Ave., Minneapolis
612-642-1267

Best Twist on the Classic: Boludo Empanadas

Boludo's pizza was a spiritual experience. Per recommendations, I ordered the Peras pizza, a combination of pear, gorgonzola, dill, and pine nuts that was truly life-changing. The crust, a perfect marriage of crunch and chewiness, could honestly be eaten on its own. And if you, like me, are feeling a little wild, you might dunk the crust in the chimichurri they serve with their famed empanadas. All the other pizzas are also fantastic but if you



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have to choose one, go with Peras. Dill and pears are not the most classic toppings on a pizza but can we please make them be? If you can find seating inside the modest space, sit down and eat your pie then and there, as it's best hot out of the oven. Though it's not pizza, definitely save a little room for their churro doughnuts or flan for dessert.

- ☐ Vegan options
- ☒ Gluten-free (\$2 upcharge)
- ☐ Halal
- ☐ Delivery

Boludo

3749 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis
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Best Classic Pie: Mucci's Italian

Her name was Beverly. We met in Minneapolis. She was hot and a little salty. (I'm sorry, I had to.) I'm talking, of course, about the Beverly pizza from Mucci's Italian in Minneapolis, aka "Trattoria Mucci." The set of deceptively simple cheeses (mas-carpone, mozzarella, and pecorino) topped with fresh cracked black pepper and a grilled lemon means you may gloss over this pie in favor of something more extravagant, but let me tell y'all: Beverly is the one for you. The cheeses are layered on top of an airy crust that's been wood-fired to a perfect crispness. When augmented by pepper and lemon, the final combo makes for an irresistible pie that's really going to disrupt your financial planning this month. Mucci's also has a St. Paul location with a different and equally delicious menu so everyone in the Twin Cities can conveniently try them out!

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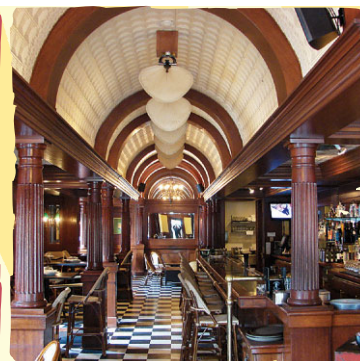
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Honorable Mention: Football Pizza by Crescent Moon Bakery

This might not be the pizza of everyone's childhood, but it is the pizza of mine. Putting cheese on leftover naan and dunking it in hari chutney is the diaspora meal your local brown kid is writing spoken-word poetry about. That's what the Afghani establishment Crescent Moon Bakery captures in its famous "football pizza." Taking Afghani flatbread, adding toppings like gyro meat, eggplant, cheese, or pepperoni, and serving it with a side of herby green sauce feels as nostalgic to me as anything. Add halal options, delivery, and a spacious location on the street where my family first found our desi groceries when we moved to Minnesota, and you'll come close to understanding why Football Pizza by Crescent Moon makes the joy of pizza accessible to so many communities and people.

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- ☐ Gluten-free
- ☒ Halal
- ☒ Delivery

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FireBox Deli thrives in north Minneapolis

By Mike Mullen

Some parents can't wait to have their kids move away. But if the business your children chose happens to smell delicious and taste even better... maybe they ought to just open up shop next door?

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 ►

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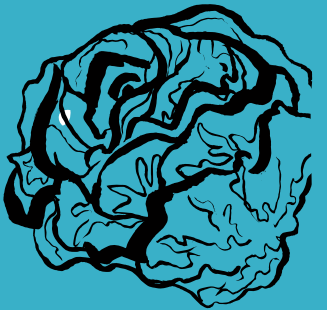
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Minneapolis gem that sprouted next to their parents' tax-preparing business on Lyndale Avenue. The Vang family opened FireBox in 2014, putting them well ahead of the curve in the local meat-smoking scene.

Lots of barbecue joints have opened since: Revival, Barbecue Beast, plus new addresses for Market Bar-B-Que and Bark and the Bite. FireBox, with its unassuming edifice and counter service operation, might be the best of them all.

And now they're branching out, with a second shop coming to St. Paul on Marshall Avenue near Snelling, a well-kicked ball's distance from Allianz Field. Starting sometime next month, Minnesota United fans should follow their noses for fire-kissed food before or after games. Maybe both.

Brisket at FireBox comes singed with a char so dark you might worry it's burnt. Stop worrying and chew: A couple lean pieces (think of these as the "health food" portion of your plate) required teeth, but the ones striped with fat damn near dissolved into smoldering bliss on the tongue.

In "Firebox Fries," the brisket teams up with melted cheese for a kind of barbecue poutine, a filling option... assuming your fellow diners don't wait until you're not looking and wolf it down before you can stop them.

FireBox's sauce is a tangy classic, complex but not overwhelming. Use it liberally. Everything at FireBox is served dry, from beautiful red-and-gold chicken wings to ugly-but-irresistible pulled pork.

Rib tips are a standout, juicy little nuggets that deliver unreasonable amounts of flavor in each bite. You'll feel like you ate a whole rack. Don't eat them in-house if you've got any shame, as you'll find yourself scratching and gnawing at the little bones, desperately seeking one last meaty scrap.

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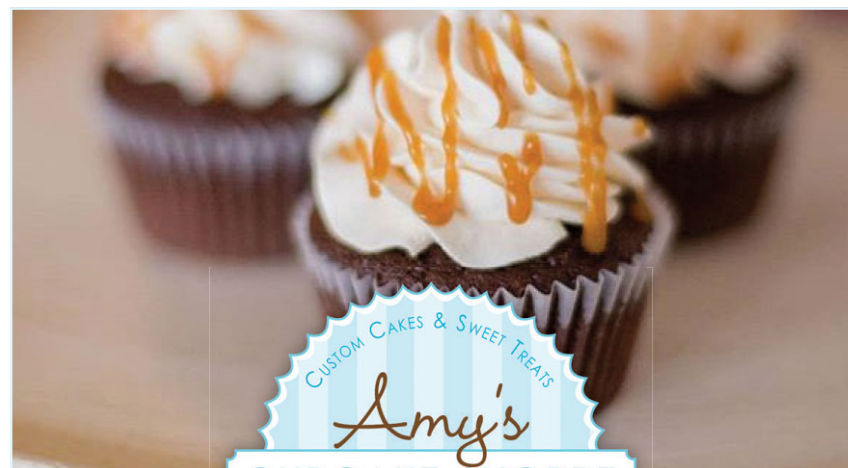


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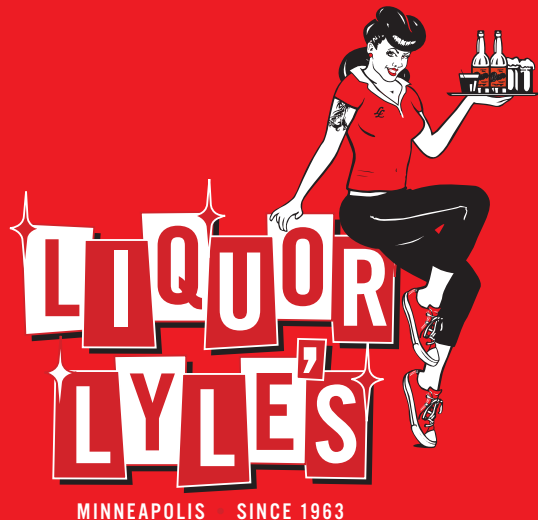
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Cubed sweet potatoes are touched up by a brown sugar mix drawing out the natural sugars without stealing the show. Collard greens are smoky and deep, that swell combination of salt and leafy bitterness. Sticky rice is expertly done, and makes a welcome bed for any of FireBox's meats.

The mac and cheese is a must. Lightly crusty up top and gooey as all get out underneath, it's good enough you might briefly forget someone sold you meat they smoked for a long time. Variety's the spice of life, but if your "two sides" are one order of mac and cheese and yet another order of mac and cheese, we can't say you'd be making a mistake.

It's food good enough to travel for, and owner Zong Vang told the Pioneer Press that diners have been known to drive to north Minneapolis from St. Paul. Their barbecue commute's about to get shorter, and the opening of a second location might just signal the rise of a smoky little dynasty on the horizon.

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4 things to know about Graze, North Loop's food hall

By Sarah Brumble

Graze Provisions + Libations—the North Loop's expansive food hall adjacent to Modist Brewing—has finally opened to the public. With so many stacked amenities, a deep roster of food vendors, playfully upscale drinks, and an indoor/outdoor setting unmatched in downtown Minneapolis, we figured a cheat sheet for how to best approach this colossus was in order.

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Here are four things you need to know about Graze before visiting.

1. It'll make a great early-day work space

Graze is divided into two floors, with three areas catering to different spheres of enjoyment. A coffee shop/work area positioned nearest to Honey & Rye Bakehouse capitalizes on floor-to-ceiling windows near Graze's entrance. Each morning the St. Louis Park-based bakery wizards begin the food hall's service through their walk-up window, beneath a curative neon reading "espresso & pastries." Though owner Anne Andrus says Honey & Rye's flagship always served undeniably good coffee, they've stepped up their game in this (their first) expansion by offering a full espresso menu.

The berth of the food hall opens at 7:30, intentionally catering to neighborhood early birds, freelancers, and passersby looking for caffeine with a side of snack-and-chill.

2. You might just eat until you pop—even at lunch

The bulk of Graze's vendors open at 11 daily, bringing to life the complex's other two spheres. Behind the stairs customers are greeted by a series of high, bar-like tables perfect for hovering or perching while munching at one of the four purveyors of solids on the ground floor, or sipping from a cocktail at the centrally located bar, which opens onto a field-like lawn.

Food-wise, there's something for every palate. MidNord expanded its offerings of Charlie-winning empanadas to include house-made churros (that also, purely by experimentation, ended up vegan). CARBON, the new project from the folks behind Gastrottruck, hinges on coal-fired pit beef (Maryland's culinary answer to barbecue), which is served roasted to a perfect medium rare and sliced razor-thin before being piled atop a variety of sandwiches.

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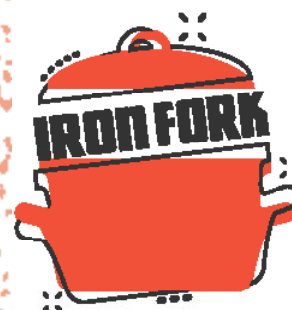
Flagsmash (which visitors may recognize from La Doña Cervecería), featuring a menu of tacos, burritos, and their notorious Megadilla; the items themselves will stay fixed, even as their main ingredients change weekly, adding a pleasant element of surprise to the dining experience. Rounding out the ground floor is a stand from twin siblings FishBowl Poke/Ramen Kazama, who plan to shift from serving their bright poké bowls to warm fare when demand for cold food begins to drop along with the thermometer.

Upstairs you'll find Lu's Restaurant and Soul Bowl ready and waiting. The former is a new concept from south Minneapolis' legendary Vietnamese sandwich joint, but the closest you'll come to a banh mi here is their cheffy burger topped with provolone, pickled daikon and carrot, cilantro, mayo, and shallots. Plated dishes infusing Vietnamese flavor into choice cuts like salmon steaks and pork chops dominate the new Lu's. As for Soul Bowl, it's no secret chef Gerard Klass has been making waves thanks to his outfit's neo-soul offerings that meld Caribbean and traditional soul flavors in a single dish (think: vegan collards, slow braised oxtails, or the Rude Boi Jerk Chicken and Waffles.) With plans of a build-your-own-brunch on the horizon, Soul Bowl is poised to shine among Graze's deep bench of food vendors.

3. The second floor's bar is destined to become, er... FancyBoi PartyLand

Where downstairs feels like half a coffee shop, upstairs is the entertainment zone. With its bubble hockey, shuffleboard, handful of flat-screen TVs hooked up to vintage Nintendo consoles (shout-out to that four-player N64 MarioKart!), and a bar the length of a school bus, Graze wants you to come play... hard.

To keep things feeling like they're of and for the community, taps were chosen to host beer brewed in the immediate neighborhood. Meanwhile



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a cocktail program designed by Jesse Held specifically caters to The Youth, and/or wants to make you forget your age. Imagine disturbingly good (we mean that positively) variations of drinks you've hopefully left in the past, like Sex on the Beach and Long Island Iced Teas, re-branded with cheeky names, and built using fine liqueurs layered in original combinations of tropical fruit juices.

4. You'll probably end up kicking it outdoors

Intentional as the atmosphere they've curated inside may be, Graze has made use of its full plot of land in a way that feels unique to the North Loop—and just maybe all of downtown. The first floor's bar opens via garage door to a counter with 10 stools, and a sprawling lawn scattered with a dozen giant picnic tables ready to cradle you and your buds in the sunshine. For those drawn to That Rooftop Life, the second-floor patio juts out above the bucolic below scene, and offers the perfect view for Target Field's fireworks displays come nightfall.

Graze Provisions + Libations
520 Fourth St. N., Minneapolis

***Blackstack Brewing**
may be your
new favorite...
coffee shop?*

By Sarah Brumble

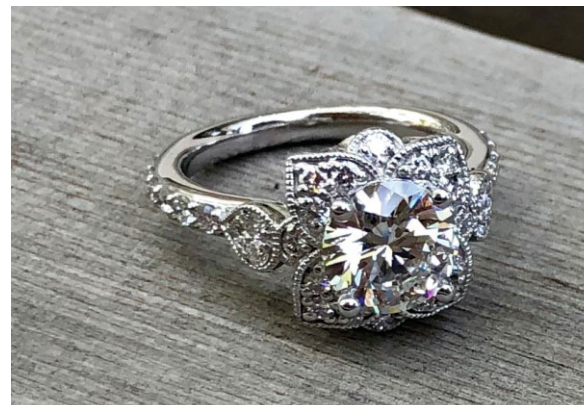
With industrial environs warmed by an eclectic array of seating, towering plants, a wall of board games, and floor-to-ceiling windows, St. Paul's Blackstack Brewing was knee-deep in coffee shop territory well before they quietly started opening early to serve coffee to bleary-eyed patrons. The espresso machine's arrival merely sealed the deal.

In August, the brewery began pulling double-duty as a full-on coffee shop seven days a week. Now they're open



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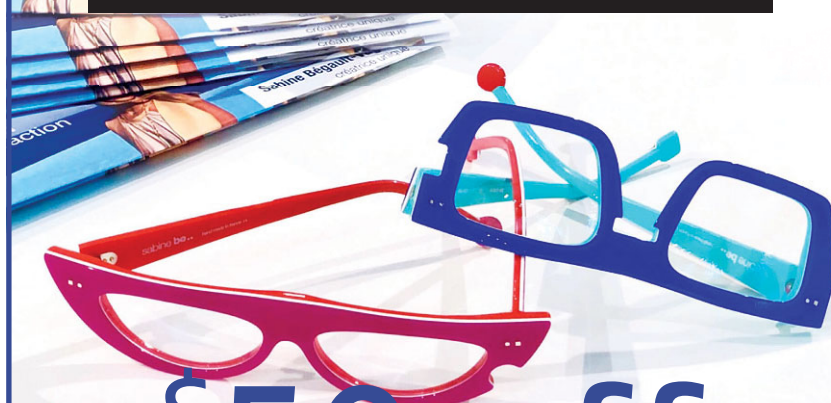
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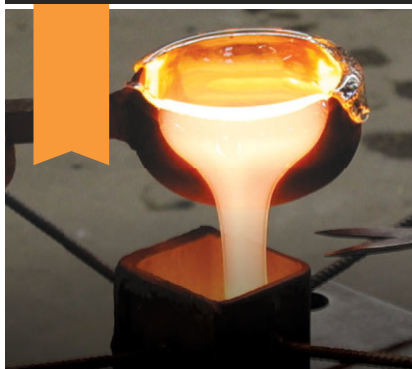
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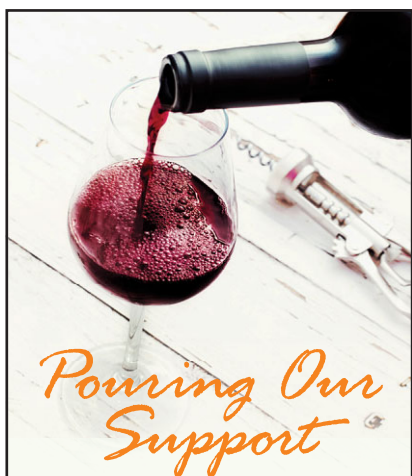
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starting at 8 a.m. Monday through Friday, and at 9 a.m. on weekends. They're serving a full coffee menu with beans from True Stone Coffee Roasters. On a recent afternoon flaky treats from Patisserie 46 packed a bakery case, while heartier fare from Nelson's Cheese & Deli was also available.

Lest this be lost on you, dear reader, once a more "polite" hour rolls around, this means it's possible to get a bunch of work done while double-fisting cappuccinos and Robo Calls (Blackstack's blueberry and pink guava Berliner). As of yet, it's also quieter and more relaxed than any other coffeeshop in the Cities, which eliminates damn near everything there is to hate about working from coffeeshops.

In short: Great job, Blackstack! Before you got us gently beer-buzzed in a way that made us never want to leave... but now we might never need to.

Blackstack Brewing

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After years of roaming, Reverie finds a home in Powderhorn

By Sarah Brumble

It's no secret to anyone around town that Reverie, the former hybrid cafe-venue once located at the corner of Franklin and Nicollet, spent the last two seasons slinging delectable plant-based fare from inside a food truck. Their cheery big blue rig has roamed far and wide—from VegFest to the MayDay Parade.

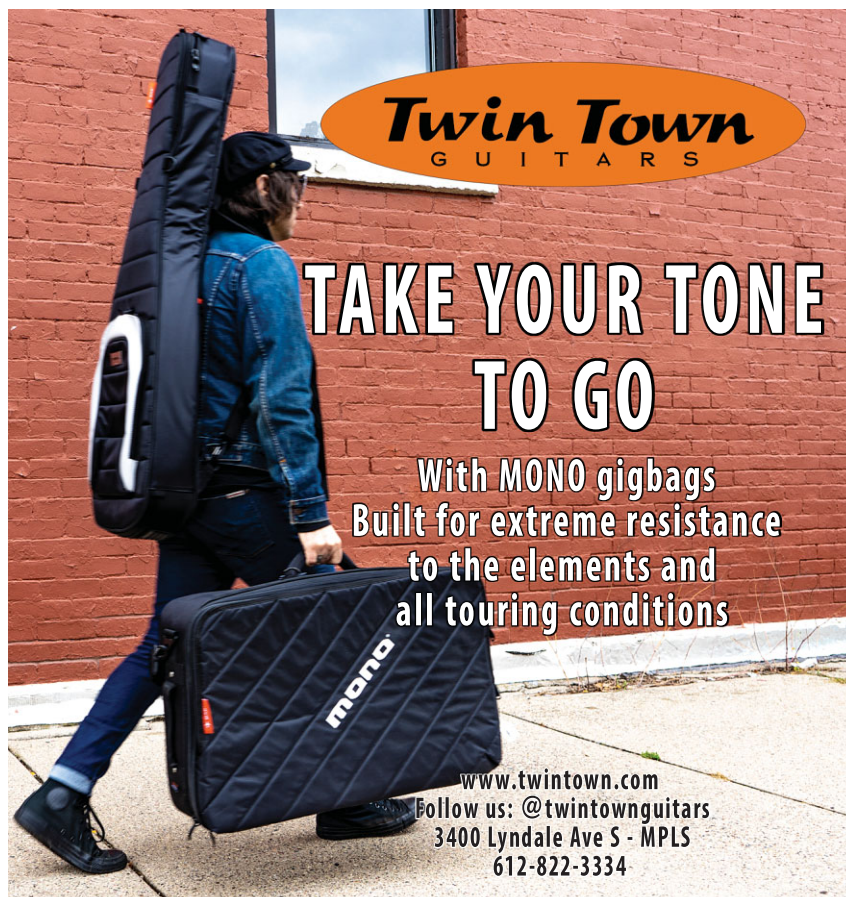
But only now, after literal years of searching, has Reverie once again found a home to settle into. Come mid-November, the plant-based street food gurus will be found in south Minneapolis, this time in the

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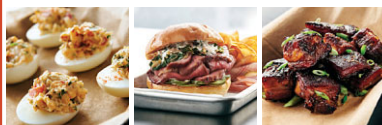


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Powderhorn neighborhood.

Reverie's Kirstin Wiegmann is, to put it mildly, pumped. "It's our first full kitchen!" Even at the former location on Eat Street they'd eked out their goods using a convection oven, a panini press, and a partial line—but it had no proper hooded ventilation or a grill. And the truck is... a truck.

Wiegmann says that in comparison to the restaurant's old days, "the menu's going to be a real expansion. There'll be a lot of stuff coming back from the old place, so people shouldn't be afraid they won't be able to get the biscuits or whatever, but we're also adding a lot of new items, ramping up our game."

Ultimately, it'll look like full lunch, dinner, and brunch menus as well as beer, wine, kombucha, coffee, and other specialty drinks.

Also, their neighbors and landlord at the new spot are awesome. "I think one thing that's really, really cool about this space is actually the stuff that's already going on there," gushes Wiegmann.

To one side is Modus Locus Gallery, while their other neighbor is a community-driven art garden where artists repaint the walls on a monthly basis throughout the summer.

"It's got this incredible artist-focused community vibe going on," says Wiegmann, "so we're really excited because that's the stuff we really care about—supporting local artists, making that space for them."

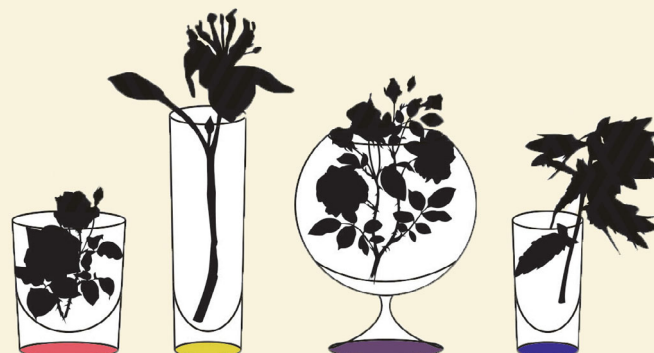
Reverie launched a crowdfunding campaign with rewards for donors that seem genuinely investment-worthy. Wiegmann says the funds gathered from this leg of the journey to stability will go to executing their vision to the next level—like preserving the space's original mahogany bar, and installing a giant front window for prime natural light.

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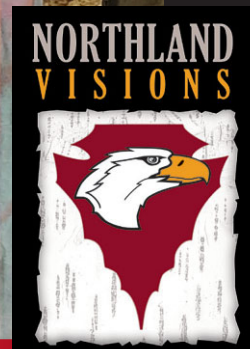
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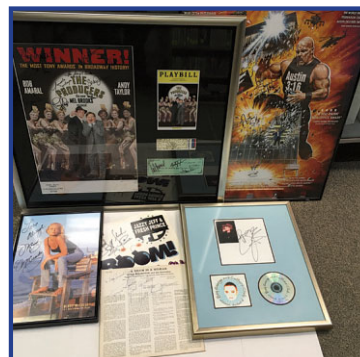
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